Effects of Benzene on Doctors

*423. SHRI UTTAMSINGH PAWAR: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government are aware of the toxic effect of Benzene on doctors and other medical staff;

(b) whether in view of above, the Director General of Central Government Health Services propose to suspend the use of Benzene in all Health care facilities under its control;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI): (a) to (d). The toxic effects of Benzene have been well documented relating mainly to its use in Industry. However, the use of Benzene in hospitals is reported to be minimal. In order to safeguard and protect hospital staff, it has been decided to set up a Committee to examine the use of chemicals and reagents in laboratories in hospitals/ institutions.

[Translation]

Right to Education

*424. SHRI O.P. JINDAL:
SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to include 'right to education' as a fundamental right in the Constitution;

(b) if so, the time by which it is likely to be included; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government for promotion and expansion of education?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI): (a) and (b). In pursuance of the Common Minimum Programme, State Education Ministers and State Education Secretaries discussed the proposal to make free and compulsory elementary education a Fundamental Right in a Conference held on 9-10 August, 1996. The Conference has recommended constitution of a committee under the Chairmanship of Union Minister of State for Education to consider the financial, administrative, legal and academic implications of the proposal. The Committee has since been constituted.

(c) The Government continues in its endeavour to implement the National Policy on Education, 1986, and its Programme of Action, 1992, which provide the broad framework for promotion and expansion of education in the country.

[English]

Monitoring of Private Health Sector

*425. SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have any machinery to evolve effective monitoring of the private health sector, particularly in view of its sharp expansion over the last decade;

(c) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken regarding the quality of medicare with special reference to equipments and total number of beds;

(c) whether the Government propose to formulate legislation to monitor the functioning of private medicare institutions and evolve and enforce minimum requirements for quality care;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI): (a) The State Governments are responsible for regulating the private sector medical establishments for which some States have laws i.e. Nursing Home Acts & Rules, Municipal laws and Land use laws.

(b) The Bureau of Indian Standards have formulated over 1000 standards covering inter-alia hospital planning, administration which, however, are recommendatory in nature.

(c) to (e) : The need to regulate the expansion of the private sector medical establishments, including their standards, fees etc. has been emphasised at various fora.

At present, the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 provides an avenue for redress in case the private medical establishments give unsatisfactory service. Government has been considering various options like setting up a machinery for accreditation of hospitals and nursing homes on the pattern followed in some other countries.

National Dental Research Institute

*426. SHRI T. GOVINDAN: Will the MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state: